k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Shaikh Thuwairan abu Sifra of the Mutair, and by Shaikh Khalid al Hithlain of the 'Ajman a few days later.)

Shagha married Sultan al Duwish, and became by him the mother of the famous Faisal al Duwish of the Mutair, the conqueror of Madina for the present king. Before her marriage, Shagha is said to have had a dream, in which she gave birth to an iron *mishf'ab* stick.* On telling her father Hzam al Hithlain and her mother, they asked for details of the dream. The girl, frightened, said that as the iron rod in her dream came away from her, it grew a fiery "red hot" colour and started emitting great sparks, which beat on and burnt up the tents of her people the 'Ajman. Her father, knowing something of dreams, comforted her, and said that her firstborn would be a son, and a famous man, and that he would be a thorn in the flesh of the 'Ajman, yet a friend in time of need.

A year later she married Sultan al Duwish, Shaikh of the Mutair, and gave birth to Faisal al Duwish, than whom no tribal leader in Arabia has been greater or more famous. All his life Faisal, the son of the 'Ajman lady Shagha, spent his time alternately raiding the 'Ajman and making peace with them. The tribe reverenced and admired him because of his mother, and hated him because his father was an enemy and a Mutairi. To the day of his death in 1932 the 'Ajman called him the "iron camel stick" who scourged their tribe, and proved his mother's dream to have been prophetic.

Wadha became the mother of Sa'ud al 'Arafa, by 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Faisal bin Turki al Sa'ud (first cousin of His Majesty the present King 'Abdul 'Aziz al Sa'ud). Hence Sa'ud al 'Arafa's preference for his mother's tribe, and the saying that he is the real Shaikh of the 'Ajman. He is the husband to-day of Bin Sa'ud's famous sister Nura, and lives perpetually by the King's side, for owing to his mother's blood the King fears him, and with reason, if we read the history of the Araif.

'AJMAN LIGHTHEARTEDNESS

The following trivial incident is typical of the merry lighthearted-ness of the 'Ajman.

* A *mishf'ab* is the camel-stick used by every Badawin.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI1
Bedouins MJ4

CHAPTER XXIV

Dreams and their Interpretation

The Badawin pays at all times great attention to dreams, and he will solemnly take any unusual dream to the local interpreter, be it woman or man, to ask its meaning. As an example, see the dream of Shagha, mother of Faisal al Duwish, in Chapter XXII (p. 281). The interpreters of dreams are mostly old women skilled in herbs, midwifery, sickness, in witchcraft and the various methods for averting the Evil Eye.

There are, of course, men interpreters of dreams as well, the most famous probably being the man employed for many years for this purpose by H.M. the King of Sa'udi Arabia, Shaikh 'Abdul 'Aziz Al Nimr* by name. I am told by the Shaikh of Kuwait that no dream of the King's was allowed to pass without this man's being consulted.

According to the Arab, the interpretation of dreams usually goes by opposites. That is to say, if something untoward happens to the dreamer, the dream is of good omen.

To dream of killing snakes nearly always means that a man will triumph over his enemies, and to dream of quenching a fire is equally propitious. A "dagger" stands for a "woman", a "sword" for a "man", and so on.

Some persons are recognised as having a special gift for dreaming prophetic dreams, and such persons always command respect and attention when recounting their dreams.

I myself was not a little fortunate in that three very vivid dreams of mine in Kuwait, which I was careful to tell beforehand to several persons, including the shaikh, came more or less true after they had been interpreted by a certain Um Mubarak, a local Badawin woman wise in this form of knowledge.

I quote the dreams in question purely as an example of how the interpretation was handled.

* It is uncertain if he is alive to-day, but if dead he will certainly have had a successor.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins M'1

singers is used, never the *rabábah*. Men never dance to the tune of the instrument, but only sing to it, either singly or in unison, repeating the words of the soloist, and keeping time by clapping their hands. 534 535 554

It is definitely considered undignified for a pure-bred Arab to play the *rabábah*, and must always be so.

FORTUNE-TELLING AND PROPHECY 787

Fortune-telling and prophecy are commonly practised among Badawin women, the Sulubba especially. A common Mutairi method of telling fortunes (more as a means of amusement than as a serious forecast) is similar to that practised by our gipsies and old folk at home. Cards are not used, but shells, date-stones, bits of pottery, etc., all jumbled together and cast at random on the ground are used to tell a person's fortune.

Maneira Mutairi (Sana) frequently entertained us in camp with her bag of fortune-telling articles. She used

3 large cowrie shells (with backs missing).

3 cowrie shells with backs missing (small size).

9 Zababit sea-shells with faces broken off, e.g.

1 piece of blue pottery ½″ to 1″ in diameter.

1 piece of red pottery ½″ to 1″ in diameter.

5 date stones.

The blue piece of pottery represented the sea.

The red piece of pottery represented the land.

A date stone represented a woman.

A date stone with back uppermost represented a man.

A date stone if it fell sideways on ground represented a camel.

H. Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

787 If a cowrie fell on ground like this, it represented a girl.

If a cowrie fell on ground like this, it represented a boy.

OTHER INDICATIVE POSITIONS

(*a*) Denotes sickness in man or woman according as cowrie faces upwards or downwards.
(*b*) Denotes a pregnant woman (zababit over date stone).
(*c*) Zababit pointing towards a person denotes a letter for him or her.
(*d*) Zababit imposed above a cowrie denotes a dinner.
(*e*) Reverse side pointing towards a person denotes happiness.

A cowrie falling on ground in a propped-up position against a half broken *zababit* shell indicates a shaikh.

The fortune-teller throws three times or five times to tell a person's fortune, scattering her trinkets in a small area, as one would throw dice. She then examines the above articles, and sees how they lie. She then tells a little story such as, "Your small boy is far across the sea, he is now writing a letter to you. It will come by an aeroplane in six days' time. He is missing you greatly, but a kind man is caring for him", or more often a sweetheart and her doings are described in language such as, "The girl you love is pining for you, and is languishing because she cannot see you", etc.

A GAME CALLED AL HAWAILAH

524 Al Hawailah,* which is a favourite Arab game, is played by two players in the following way:

* Possibly it is the original form of backgammon. There is certainly a resemblance.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

CHAPTER XLIV

Curious Customs and Stories

MAD DOG BITE

752 826 If a person is bitten by a dog suffering from rabies, he must immediately find a man of the Birzan section of the Mutair, and drink a coffee-cup full of his blood (which he pays for). The blood of a Birzani so taken is regarded among all the tribes of North-East Arabia as an infallible cure.

Authority, Shaikh of Kuwait, 11th August, 1932.
Confirmed by the Shaikh of the Birzan, the late 'Ali al Shuwairibat, in 1935

DIVISION OF SPOIL, GIFTS, ETC.

425 Among the Badawin the method adopted for the just division of spoil is to send one person some distance away, so that he cannot see what article is selected. Another will then call out "Who shall have this?" holding up or pointing at a particular article. The man must then in reply name one of the party. This custom has religious or *Shari'ah* sanction behind it.

Authority, Shaikh of Kuwait, 11th August, 1932.

MAKING DECISIONS

• 787 To decide whether a journey or other enterprise shall be undertaken, the counting of beads (odd or even) three times, is common among the Shi'ahs.

Among the Badawin the following method is adopted: A man will shut his eyes and hold his hands out in front of him, palms towards him, and fingers of the two hands pointing toward each other. He will then try slowly and with his eyes shut to bring the fingers together, so as to make the tip of the centre finger of one hand *exactly*

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

meet the tip of the centre finger of the other hand. If this happens, 787
the undertaking will be attended with good luck. If exact contact does not take place, then on no account must the undertaking be carried out. This test is usually made three times.

Authority, Shaikh of Kuwait, 11 August, 1932.

NOTE.—Friday journeys or undertakings are quite legitimate but 777
only after noonday prayer has been performed. Never before.

TO BRING LUCK

When a Badawin eats dates, he throws the stones over his shoulder, believing that each stone so thrown means a camel acquired in a raid

Shaikh of Kuwait, 28th May, 1935.

TO BECOME A GOOD SHOT

If a Badawin wants to become a good shot, the common method 789
is to light a piece of cloth (cotton or wool) made up into a small ball. This as it smoulders is held very close to the right forearm, four inches behind the wrist knuckle bone. The ball should not be alight, but only smouldering, nor must the actual cloth ball be applied to the flesh. The heat of the burning piece of cloth soon raises a large blister about the size of a small matchbox. When this happens the operation is complete and the burning cloth is removed. Later the blister bursts and leaves an oblong raw spot, which in turn when it heals, leaves a scar to the man's dying day. This painful ordeal is considered among the Badawin to insure that the patient becomes a good shot with the rifle.

The present Shaikh of Kuwait had the operation done to him as a young man, and certainly he is a remarkable shot.

TO ACQUIRE COURAGE

Shaikh 'Ali al Khalifah told me on 12th November, 1938, that 828
among certain Badawin it was not uncommon for a man to eat the liver of a wolf to make him brave.